

CHARITY<sup>(G)</sup>

TO OUR

*Poor Persecuted Brethren Abroad,*

Recommended in A

SERMON

Preached on the

FAST-DAY,

*April 5. 1699.*

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By CHARLES LIDGOULD, Rector of DUNSBY  
in *Lincolnshire.*

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LONDON,

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SERMON

Preached on the

EAST-DAY

April 2, 1833

By the Rev. Mr. [illegible]

at the [illegible] Church  
in [illegible]  
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]  
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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To the Right Reverend Father in God,  
JAMES Lord Bishop of Lincoln.

MY LORD,

THE Countenance your Lordship has been pleased to give me has emboldned me to beg leave that I may make this Address, as an humble Testimony of my Zeal to the Work your Lordship has recommended in a Circular Letter to your Clergy.

Charity, indeed, is a Subject worn so threadbare, that I wish it have not lost its warmth; and the frequent Occasions of exercising it (which should cherish and keep it alive among Christians, that ought to rejoyce in all Opportunities of doing Good) been the cause of its being too much disregarded and shifted off.

For my own part, I desire it may not be thought Vanity in me to declare, that my Sympathy, as well as the sense of my Duty, have engaged me to promote this pious Work with all the Affection, wherewith I could at once express and back your Lordship's Arguments, and my own to encourage and set it forward.

The Parish, under my Care, is both Poor and Small, and therefore not much to be expected from it; tho' I think I can say there is hardly Man, Woman, or Servant, but  
have

## The Dedication.

*have cast in their Mite. And should the whole Nation give but as much, in proportion to their several Abilities (as, I humbly beseech God, All throughout may) we need not fear coming behind the Protestant Churches abroad in Contributions toward the relief of our Poor Suffering Brethren.*

*To which purpose, I heartily wish this plain Discourse may have an influence farther than I had thought of, had I not had a Sermon now in the Press, Preached the last Year upon occasion of His Majesty's Proclamation against Profaness, &c. which should have been out a Quarter of a Year since, but for the neglect (to say no worse) of one that was intrusted with it; out of whose Custody I was forced to take it near two Months after the time he had engaged, by Promise under his Hand, that it should be Printed. So that now, it being thus long defer'd, I resolved this should wait on your Lordship at the same time with it; and humbly desire your Lordship to accept of both together, as a sincere, tho' mean, Acknowledgment how much I am,*

*My Lord,*

*Your Lordships Devoted and*

*Obedient Son and Servant,*

*CHA. LIDGOULD.*

*Dunsby, Easter-  
Eve, 1699.*



A

# FAST-SERMON.

1 PET. IV. X.

*As every Man hath received the Gift, so Minister the same one to another, as Good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God.*

**T**Here is nothing more unquestionable than that God has imparted to every particular Member of his Church certain Gifts and Graces, of the Use and Employment whereof he will one day exact a strict and severe Account. Every true Christian hath a Two-fold Vocation or Calling. The First is General, To the Profession of that Religion, which our Saviour and his Apostles have transmitted down unto us. The Second is more Special, To some particular Employment, that may tend to the benefit and behoof both of himself and others. This is what St. Paul means by the word, 1 Cor. 7. 20. *Let every man abide in the same calling, wherein he was called*; and therein doubtless, without encroaching on that of another, he may render himself very beneficial to the good of his Neighbours; For God hath given to every one such a measure of Grace, as may make him some way  
B
useful

useful to the good of his Church, whether by gently admonishing his Fellow members, when he perceives them going astray, or winning them over that are already gone, by the example of a Holy and Virtuous Life. Which if every one of us would but seriously consider, we should find, that, in whatsoever Station we are, there is none of us all exempted from being, in some measure, serviceable to God's Church and People. As Provident and Careful Parents deal with their Children, they suffer them not to live idly and sluggishly at home, to eat the Fruit of other Men's Labours, but do wisely take Care that they may be fitted and enabled for some special Employment, whereby they may Eat in the sweat of their own brows, and become instrumental to the common Good; so doth God deal with his Family, his Household, the Church. No Servant, no Son, but shall have some Employment; for he will have no Loiterers in his Vineyard, no unserviceable, unprofitable Servants in his Harvest. What then will become of those licentious Libertines, that are so far from endeavouring the Salvation of others, that they are altogether regardless of their own Souls? or of those malicious Pharisees, of whom our Saviour complains, *That they will neither enter into Heaven-themselves, nor suffer those to enter in that would?* Whatsoever becomes of them, let it not be so with us; but, since it is the part of every Christian earnestly to desire, and carefully to endeavour, the Spiritual Welfare of his Brethren, let us strive to improve those Talents, which we have received, to the Glory of Him that gave them, and to the Benefit of them that want them. *As every man hath received the Gift, so minister the same one to another, as good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God.*

Mat. 23. 13

That's

That's the Sence some Expositors have thought fit to put on these words.

Others, and among them the Judicious and Learned *Hammond*, have adapted the sence and meaning of them to the Duty this Day required of us, viz. to Works of Charity, Beneficence and Liberality to our indigent Brethren; making it a continuation of the sence of the preceding Verse; *Use hospitality one to another without grudging*; Communicate of the good things God has bestowed on you with a ready hand, and a willing mind: And *as every man has received the Gift*, that is, Wealth, or any other good thing, so let him freely distribute it to others, who stand in need; that you may hereby approve your selves *Good Stewards* and Dispen-sers of that Plenty God has blest you withall; *As good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God*. And so we find likewise those words interpreted in the verse following: *If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth. If any man minister*, that is, distribute or exercise Liberality to the Poor, as it is there Paraphra-sed, let him do it in proportion to that Estate which God has given him. And from this sence of the words I shall endeavour to excite your Charity to our Persecuted Brethren abroad, after I have first handled them in the former, by shewing you some Reasons, why we ought to advance the Spiritual good of our Brethren, by imploying those *Talents*, those Parts, those Graces, that Reason and Understanding God has given us, to his Glory, and the benefit of those who are not blest with so great a share.

- I. My first Reason for this shall be, because it is a Duty God requires of us, *Deut. 4. 10.* wherein he not only enjoins it, but promises to be himself an Instrument, an Agent in the furtherance of it. *I will cause them to hear my words (saith he) that they may learn to fear me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their Children.* This is what the Apostle so often inculcates in all his Epistles; as in that to the *Col. 3. 16.* *Let the word of Christ dwell in you plentifully in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another; and in the 1 Theff. 5. 11.* *Exhort one another, and edify one another, even as you do:* So *Heb. 3. 13.* *Exhort one another daily, while it is called today;* and again *Rom. 14. 19.* *Let us follow those things which concern peace, and wherewith one may edify another.* St. Peter, *1 Ep. 2. 5.* compares the Faithful to a *Spiritual House*, whereof we are the *Living Stones*, which if not cemented together, by Christian Charity, will soon turn into a ruinous heap. Every Man must bring something to the building up or repairing this House; and altho' the Pastors of the Church are the Principal Builders under our great Master Christ, yet must we all in general, and every one in particular, contribute our utmost endeavours, not only by private Reproof and Admonition, by Exhortation and Counsel, but especially by our own good Examples to reform what is amiss, and not suffer Sin to reign in our Brethren. So that every Man in some sense is, what *Cain* denied to be to *Abel*, his Brother's keeper. And as God has placed within every one of us a Conscience, as well to chide us when we have done evil, as to check our *Jehu-like* march, when we would run into Sin, so has he given to each of us a Friend or a Brother without, that should, as the Angel did by *Lot*, call

*Gen. 4. 9.*

*Gen. 19. 16.*

call upon us and lead us, nay, enforce us out of *Sodom*, out of the danger into which Sin would hurry us. And he that doth truly and faithfully discharge this duty to his Brother, doth the highest and most transcendent act of Charity in the World; for he saves a Soul that was likely to perish, and instrumentally redeems his Brother from the jaws of Hell and the power of Satan; and not only so, but receives likewise infinite advantage to himself by the performance of this Duty: For, besides his reward with God, and the comfort in his own Bosom, he engages his Friend to a return of Gratitude and Justice, and so begets the truest Friendship, and the most indissoluble tie of Amity that can be between Man and Man. So that, he that performs this Duty as he ought, treasures up to himself three of the most inestimable Jewels in the World; *First*, A good Conscience within; *2dly*, A true Friend without; *3dly*, The favour of that God who hath enjoyed it; who, for our Reward, shall make us to *shine as the Stars* for Wisdom in this lower Firmament, and for transcendency of Glory in that which is above. *Mat. 12. 3.*

*Secondly*, Let us practice this doing of good to our Brethren, because we cannot express our Love unto God, or our Thankfulness for those Blessings we receive from him, better than by improving them to the enlargement of his Glory, in the Conversion of others. *Simon, thou Son of Jonah, lovest thou me? then feed my sheep*, saith our Saviour: Which words he repeats no less than three times. Thrice he urges him to the same Confession, saith *St. Chrysostom*, and thrice he conjures him by that Confession to the same Duty; to shew, that as there is nothing wherein Christ is more joyed than in the welfare of his Church, so there is no better way for us to de-

II.

*Joh. 21. 15, 16, 17.*

demonstrate our Affections unto him, than by all holy  
 Joh. 13. 35 means to endeavour the Salvation of each other. *By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one for another.*

III. And thus, in the Third place, as it is the best demonstration we can make of our Love to God, so is it likewise of our Love to our Neighbour. The greatest Love that we read of among Men, is, that of a Father to his Son, and therefore is the Love of God himself often shadowed out by that Love. *As a Father pitieth his own Children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* Now, how doth a Father express his Love to his Son? Surely not so much by Feeding and Cloathing him; This is the least part of the Duty incumbent on Parents, and more properly belongs to the Mother than the Father; *'Tis the Mother's Duty to cherish and bring him up, but the Father's to educate and instruct him,* saith the great Philosopher, in his Oeconomicks. The Love of the Father is most seen in the well modelling of his Son's Manners, which is a thing of wonderful importance, and for the most part of Immortal consequence; for, what we sow in the Spring, we reap in the Harvest. The Spring of a Man's Life is his Childhood, and what impressions are then made, be they good or bad, those we generally carry with us to our Graves, and what we carry thither, remains on the Tally of Eternity. The first Token of the Father's Love to his Son is seen in the care he takes of his Education; that the first impressions that are made on him, be the fear of God, and the love of Goodness; and afterwards, as his Faculties grow more strong and vigorous, he goes on to season them with the Principles of Religion, the Precepts of Morality, and the Dictates of Wisdom and Prudence.

And

Psalms 103.  
 13.



And to this end he sometimes Counsels and Advises him, what is to be embraced, and what avoided, what is necessary for his well-being, and what superfluous; what is just and honest, and what is not. Sometimes he comforts and encourages him against the Difficulties that may dishearten him; and when he finds him neglective of his Duty, he changes his Countenance toward him, and first admonishes, then rebukes, then threatens him; and if none of these will prevail, he adds *Verbis Verbera*, to words of reproof, stripes of Correction; and all these are but the Expressions of his Fatherly Affection, an Affection as infinitely surmounting that of giving Food and Raiment, as the incorruptible Soul doth the perishing Body. Thus the highest Expressions of our Love, and the purest works of Christian Charity, are those which have for their Object the Spiritual welfare of our Brother's Soul. To Instruct the Ignorant, to bind up the broken-hearted, to reduce those that are out of the way, to support those that are weak, to restore with meekness those that are fallen, to admonish, reprove, convince, and, as much as lies in us, to restrain those that are wilful and obstinate; this is the proper Language, and the most perfect Demonstration of Divine Love. *Non amator Servus aut Filius, cum non corripitur*, saith St. August. Think not that thou canst love thy Servant, and not correct him, thy Son, and not chastise him, or thy Neighbour, and not reprove him. *Non est ista Charitas, sed languor*; this is not Charity, but fondness and stupidity. *Fervet Charitas ad emendandum, ad corrigendum*; perfect Charity burns with an holy Zeal, and will not be satisfied till it hath wrought that Character and Impression of  
Grace

Grace and Goodnets in others, which it hath received in it self.

- IV. *Fourthly*, and lastly, We cannot imitate our heavenly Father in any thing more, than in endeavouring the Spiritual Good of others; without which, Man is so unlike the Image wherein he was made, that he is but little better than a Beast, preying only to satisfy his own appetite; whereas *Homo homini Deus*, a good Man is a God among Men: For, as every Creature derives its Being from that inexhaustible Fountain of Goodness that is in God, so the whole Universe is partaker of the Charitable Man's communicated Goodness. This is it, Charity, I say, it is, that gives Life and Being to all other Graces and Virtues, which without this are not so properly Graces, as Blemishes and Deformities, not so truly Virtues, as Vanity and Emptiness. Honour, Riches, Beauty, Wisdom, Knowledge, if not *season'd* with this Salt, do but putrefy and lose their savour. *Hast thou all Faith, so that thou canst remove Mountains, and hast not Charity, thou art nothing.* Couldst thou comprehend in thy Memory the whole Book of God, and understand all the Mysteries thereof; couldst thou speak all Tongues, and unriddle every Prophecy, yet if thou enjoyest those Gifts to thy self only, *If thou hidest these Talents in the Earth, or puttest this Light of thine under a Buskel*, what is the World the better for thee? what account canst thou give of these Graces to him, who hath intrusted thee with them? True Love is never idle, wheresoever it is, it is working; so that when once the Holy Spirit of God hath made this impression on our Hearts, there doth naturally, and necessarily succeed an indefatigable endeavour to propagate that Goodness in others, which God hath im-

1 Cor. 13.  
2.

Mat. 25. 25.  
Luke 11.  
33.

imprinted on our selves; and therefore let us beseech God that he would Engrave the Characters of this Divine Love on our Hearts, *That we may every one of us, as we have received the Gift, minister the same one to another, as good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God.*

So much for that sence of the words, as they signifie the improvement of God's Gifts and Graces in us to the spiritual Benefit and Edification of others.

I come now to the other sence of them, namely, That of Communicating the good things of this Life, wherewith God has supplied us, to the Reliefe and Support of those, from whom he hath either withheld or withdrawn them; that we would in this respect, *according as every man hath received the Gift, that is, his Portion of God's Bounteous Liberality, minister the same,* that is, impart and dispence of our Substance toward others that are in want, *as good Stewards;* as becometh faithful Stewards, who are intrusted with God's various Mercies and Blessings to the same end, *of the manifold Grace of God,* that is, of his Liberality in divers kinds, particularly, of the Wealth he has committed to them as Stewards, to distribute to them that stand in need of it, saith the Learned Dr. Hammond, in his Note on the word *Χαίρει* in that Place.

And here we may observe, how that God in the Allwise Dispensations of his Providence has order'd it so, that we should never want Objects to exercise our Charity upon; some being Born in such Circumstances, as daily to need the Assistance and Reliefe of others; some being reduced by the sudden violence of Fire, Water, Storms, Tempests, Thunder, Lightning,

1 Tim. I.  
19.

Heb. 10.  
34.

Heb. 10,  
32. 11, 38.

Act. 11. 19.

ning, Rapine, and other surprizing Accidents from a plentiful Condition, to extreme Want and Poverty; from being able to assist others, to stand in need of that assistance themselves: Some, by the cruel Tyranny of Merciless Men, to be driven from *under their own Vines, and their own Fig-trees*, to seek Shelter and Support in Foreign Countries, and that too for the sake of God and his holy Religion, chusing rather to endure and undergo the greatest Hardships, than to *make Shipwreck of their Faith and a good Conscience*; which is the Case of those who are this day recommended to your Charity; who, if Suffering for Righteousness sake, can claim any Title to our Pity and Compassion (and certainly we must disclaim our own Title and Interest in Christ, if it does not) may challenge as great a measure of our Commiseration as ever any Object did; they being such as have kept their Faith intire and undefiled ever since their first embracing the Gospel, and that is longer than can be said of any other Nation or People in the Christian World; and rather than they will now pollute themselves with Romish Idolatry and Superstition, suffer not only *the spoiling of their Goods*, but even the being Exterminated and Banished from their Native Soil, *Enduring a great fight of afflictions, wandering in Deserts, and Dens, and Caves of the Earth*; herein coming not behind the first Professors of Christianity, who were dispersed and scattered abroad upon the *Persecution that arose about Stephen*. On the mentioning of which, let me propound to you the example of that First Age of Christians, how ready the Churches of *Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth* were to relieve the Necessities of their Poor Brethren that were in *Judea*.

Of

Of which we find St. Paul giving a large account in the 8th. and 9th. Chapters of his 2d. Ep. to the Cor. How that even under a great tryal of afflictions, when they were in great Distress and Poverty themselves, they abounded in a chearful Liberality toward them; and even beyond what their Circumstances would allow them to do, they were willing of their own accords, without being so much as called upon, to make large Collections for their Supply, that they did, I say, without being solicited, voluntarily contribute what they were able, nay, and more than they could well spare; to their power, saith St. Paul, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves.

2 Cor. 8.3.

And that ye may all here present abound in this Grace also, I need use no other, nor can give you better Encouragement than the Apostle gives his *Corinthians* on that occasion. First. From the Example of Christ; For ye know (saith he) the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that tho' he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye thro' his poverty might be rich. As if he should have said, To the performance of this Duty, ye can want no Motives, when ye consider the Example of Christ in his Dealings towards us, his Liberality and Bounty in exhausting himself for us, submitting himself to so mean a Condition, that thereby we might be spiritually enriched, as Dr. Hammond has paraphrased those words.

v. 7.

I.

v. 9.

Secondly, From the Acceptance and Reward the chearful Performance hereof will meet with from God. For if there be first a willing mind (saith he) it is accepted according to what a man hath; supposing a Man to do what he is able, that resolution of his, if it be performed, that is, if he do according to his Ability,

II.

v. 12.

shall be well accepted and rewarded by God ; as it is again paraphrased in that Chapter. And so again, ch. 9. v. 7. *Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a chearful giver ; not with any trouble to part with it, or, as if it were extorted from him ; for the Liberality that God loves, and will reward, must be such as is shewn with all alacrity and chearfulness. To which there follows in the next verse*

- III. *A Third Encouragement. God is able (saith he) to make all Grace abound toward you, that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.* Which is a very good Argument to take away all fear and mistrust that such Liberality may bring our selves into Streights and Want (which is a too common hindrance and check to Charity.) God, saith he, is the Fountain of all Plenty, and is able to make this Grace, this Charity, this Liberality, which you shew to others, turn to the increase of your own Wealth, by giving a Blessing to it, and making it multiply to you, that it may become like Seed cast into the Ground, to bring forth the increase of an *hundred fold*, promised to those that part with any thing for his sake. And thus every Alms you give, shall make you the Richer instead of the Poorer, as the Learned Dr. says on these words, bringing you by God's Blessing, such a *sufficiency of all things, that you may abound to every good work*, that you may, out of your abundance, be constantly able to supply others, and have enough for every Object of Charity that offers it self to you. To which purpose I must desire you to take notice of one thing more, which the Apostle would have his *Corinthians* consider, in the 6th  
verse



verse, and that is, *That he that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountefully, shall reap bountefully.* He that contracts his Hand, and gives not suitably to his comings in, must expect the less from God, must not look for so great increase in his Substance, so much success in his worldly Affairs, as he who giveth more bountefully, and openeth his Hand as wide as his Circumstances will permit. For, God will most certainly reward Charity in proportion to the several degrees of it; and he that distributes most Liberally, shall be sure to receive the greater advantages from God, and that even in this Life, which is the strongest Argument that can be used even to the most worldly-minded Man that is; if so be he can but be convinced of the truth hereof, or, in other terms, if he can but believe the word of God, which says also in the 112 Psal. *He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness remaineth for ever, his horn shall be exalted with honour; his generation shall be blessed; wealth and riches shall be in his house.* Nay, the holy Prophet makes it the Observation of his Old Age, that, so many Years as he had lived, he never saw, either the Charitable Man or his Children Destitute. *I have been young (says he) and now am old, and yet never saw I the righteous forsaken; that is, the Liberal and Bounteful Man (which is the true meaning of the word there) or his seed begging their bread.*

v. 9.

— 2.

— 3.

Pf. 37. 25.

But now, if, after all that has been said, the distressed and deplorable Condition of our Poor Brethren, our Christian Brethren, our Protestant Brethren, professing the same Religion with our selves, and even at this time groaning under a most severe and heavy Persecution for the Profession of that Religion; which, if God

had

\* See Dr.  
Ham-  
mond's  
Note on  
*Συστατικὴ*  
*Ἐπιστολὴ*,  
2 Cor. 3. 1.

had not mercifully and miraculously interposed, was, within these few Years, like to have been our own Case. Which is one of the Topicks our Reverend *Diocesan*, in his \* *Systatick Letter*, has thought proper to be insisted on, among others, as a fit Motive to excite your Charity on their behalf; and which, because the time will not allow me to enlarge on, by way of Addition to what I have and shall offer upon this occasion, I have thought meet to represent to you only in the words of that Letter; which are, indeed, so full and comprehensive, that they can receive no advantage by my amplifying and expatiating upon them; especially, if you have been so attentive to what is there urged, as to give each Consideration its due weight. If this, I say, will not move us: If the Example of the first Race of Christians, when some of their Brethren were under Afflictions, and brought to great Distress in *Judea*, together with St. *Paul's* Encouragements and Motives to that Charity, which their own forwardness and willingness had in a manner superseded and forestalled: If the holy *Psalmist's* description of the Liberal Man's thriving Condition, together with his own experimental Observation of the truth and certainty thereof, so far as he could make proof of it throughout the whole Series and Course of his Life, namely, That he never saw such a One, or his Children after him, come to want: If all this will not provoke and stir up our Charity, our Liberality on this pressing occasion; Let me beg of you, Beloved,

- IV. In the last place, In the bowels of Jesus Christ, that great Pattern of the most extensive Charity, that ever was shewed, or that ever Mankind was capable of receiving,

ceiving, that you would, when such great, and, in a manner, irresistible Objects offer themselves, endeavour to enlarge your Hearts in imitation of Him, whose whole Life was one continued act of Charity; *He went about doing good.* And who, the more effectually to work upon us by all the Motives of Hope and Fear, has made our Charity the very Touchstone, whereby to try us at the last Day. *I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink, I was a stranger, and ye took me in, naked and ye clothed me; come ye blessed, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you;* as you heard in the Gospel appointed for this occasion. And, if we have fail'd of being thus Charitable in our Life-time, let us remember, that it will be in vain for us to expostulate with him in that Day, or to urge for our selves that we never dealt thus unkindly by him, since he has there given his answer to such: *Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these, ye did it not unto me.* The consequence of which hard-heartedness we find in the next words, namely, *That these shall go away into everlasting Punishment.*

Act. 10. 38.

Mat. 25. 35.

— 36.

— 34.

— 45.

— 45.

In a word, To use an Argument futable to the present Season, we must never expect to reap the Benefit of his Cross and Passion (which we are this Week Commemorating) that great Charity of his in Dying for us, that we might Live with him hereafter, unless we endeavour to Live like him here. And like him most certainly we cannot be, unless we exercise acts of Love and Kindness one towards another; which then, if ever, ought to appear, when our Brethren stand in the greatest need of it. In vain do we call our selves Christians, if we are not sensible of each other.

thers Wants and Necessities. Christians are a body of Men, united under one Head, Christ Jesus. *Ye are the body of Christ*, saith St. Paul, 1 Cor. 12. 27. *and members in particular.* Now, *if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it*, saith he, velle before. And if we are Fellow-sufferers with them, this must necessarily prevail with us, as far as we are able, to relieve them, since, in doing so, we relieve our selves. And in this sence, *he that loveth his Neighbour, loveth himself*, or rather, he that loveth himself, cannot likewise but love his Neighbour. We have not a right sence of the Miseries of others, unless it put us upon Works of Charity and Kindness toward them. It is not the wishing them in better Circumstances, or saying, *Be thou warm*, or, *be thou full*, that will serve the turn: For, *if a Brother or Sister be destitute of daily food*, and one of you say thus unto them, saith St. James, *notwithstanding ye give them not such things as be needful for the body, what doth it profit?* So that we cannot be said to have any Compassion for our Brethren, unless we do effectually assist them; and consider with our selves, what a miserable estate we should think our selves, were we, as they now are, driven out of our own Country to seek our Bread in a Foreign Land. But, though even common Humanity might teach us this, yet have we still much stronger Motives and Engagements to it from the Word of God; if ye will but suffer this farther Consideration, beside what I have already urged, to take any place, and only once more allow our chiefest Interest and Happiness to be so; for, *by being ready to give, and glad to distribute, we lay up in store for our selves a good foundation against* the

Jam. 2.  
15. 16.

1 Tim. 6.  
19.

## A FAST-SERMON.

17

the time to come, that we may lay hold on Eternal Life. Nay, God seems to stand engaged, in vindication of his Justice and Equity, what we thus lay out, to pay us again; which is plainly hinted from that of the Apostle, *God is not unrighteous to forget our work* Heb. 6.10. *and labor of Love, which we shew for his names sake;* as if it were a piece of unrighteousness and injustice in him to forget it. In a word, Unless we will disown that we have any Love for God, we cannot forbear relieving the Necessities of our indigent Brethren; since the Apostle has made this a special Mark of our having no Love for him; *Whoso bath this world's* 1 Joh. 3. *good, saith he, and seeth his Brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

I hope I shall not need to add any more Arguments, and therefore shall only repeat this one Request to you, that you would but make their Case your own, and thereby work in your selves a Fellow feeling of their Distress; which if you can once be perswaded to do, there must naturally arise in every one, nay, even the poorest among you (who indeed upon that very score are the best Judges of their Condition) a desire of contributing the utmost of your assistance toward them.

*Haud ignara mali miseris succurrere disco,* was the saying of Dido to the Sea-wrack'd Trojans; I have had so much experience of Hardship my self, that I cannot but commiserate the Calamities of others. And even the meanest among us, if they have any Bowels, if they can but bring their Hearts to a sense of the greatness of those Sufferings our Poor  
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Brethren abroad now lye under, cannot but have one Mite to spare on that account. I shall urge none to do any thing beyond their Abilities; and I hope none will shew themselves so narrow-hearted, and so distrustful of the Divine Providence, as to do any thing short of it.

It is indeed too plain an Argument that we dare not trust Almighty God, when we cannot persuade our selves to part with any thing to Charity, for fear we should hereafter stand in need of it our selves. *Know ye not that he that giveth to the Poor, lendeth to the Lord?* And can we hope to put out our Money to better Interest, or desire a more Responsible Debtor? who does always most certainly repay us even in this Life, which there is no Man but may find out by his own experience, that has but the Grace and the Gratitude to make the Observation.

Prov. 19.  
17.

I shall conclude all with an earnest Petition to Almighty God, that the unusual Pressingness of this Extraordinary Occasion may render all I have urged the more effectual, and make so much the deeper impression on your Hearts; shutting up what I have said with that most Excellent Collect in the Church-Liturgy.

O Lord



O Lord, who hast taught us that all our Doings without Charity are nothing worth, send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our Hearts that most Excellent Gift of Charity, the very bond of Peace and of all Virtues, without which, whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee. Grant this for thy only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen,

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**F I N I S.**

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